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JASPER;

*APRICOT GOLDING AND
SHORT POEMS,*

BY
MISS STAPLETON.

SECOND EDITION



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JASPER,
THE MAN WHO NEVER FEARED WHAT
PEOPLE SAID;

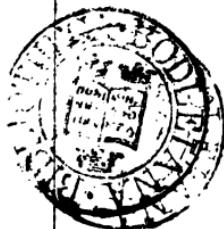
Apricot Golding of Sunnyside;
AND
SHORT POEMS.

BY
MISS STAPLETON,

*Author of "THE PASTOR OF SILVERDALE," "THE
FISHERMAN'S FAMILY," &c.*

Second Edition.

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Jasper;

THE MAN WHO NEVER FEARED WHAT PEOPLE SAID.

THE Sea, the Sea, the glorious Sea!
So full of life and hope to me;
I gaze upon its changing wave,
Now fiercely dashing foam to lave
The rocks, that boldly bound its course,
Forbid its huge gigantic force;
Now rippling as the summer lake,
And sparkling as the diamond flake.

I view it from a terraced walk,
Where silv'ry pines and fir-trees talk
In language known but to themselves,
And to those fair bewitching elves,
In whom we all have faint belief,
Although we mingle it with grief,—
And tell you Superstition's born,
A graceless rose, a worthless thorn.

The sky-lark, though his nest is low,
Soars in the earliest sunlight glow!
The golden summer skies appear,
One cloudless hope without a fear;
The blue below, the blue above,
Speak of that perfect world of love,
Where pain and sorrow are unknown,
And SATISFACTION reigns alone!

I gazed in lingering reverie,
 Upon this sight of sky and sea!
 And then my steps I upwards traced
 Towards a fair Lodge, where interlaced,
 The rose and honeysuckle twine,
 In grace and loveliness divine;
 Fresh as the early morning dew,
 Which, though the same, is ever new.

Within I sought a lovely flower,
 Perfecting fast for Eden's bower;
 A flower that often seemed to say,
 "I long have bloomed to cheer your way,—
 But wintry days of changing sky,
 Warn me to stretch my wings and fly
 Where Spring and Sunshine never cease,
 And Joy hath an eternal lease!"

The cottage-door I open found,
 And heard the old familiar sound
 Of Fire-Fly's bark,—a dog of fame,
 Whose character was as his name.
 And Zebee's Mother came to greet
 Me in her spotless gown, so neat;
 A fragile creature, never made
 To dwell with chill or gloomy shade!

Her husband lived at Harkworth Hall,
 Where peace and plenty shone on all;
 The prettiest Lodge the Master gave
 His Butler's wife, expense to save.
 But e'en in this bright sunny spot,
 Death would an arrow vile have shot;
 For long his ruthless hand was stayed,
 But now its with'ring power must fade!

The Mother led me to a room,
Where dancing sunbeams banished gloom ;
While Zebee watched the sparkling sea,
And thought of Immortality.
Too weak to rise up from her chair,
Reclining, she enjoyed the air ;
Longing to pierce the azure blue,
To gain of Crystal Sea a view.

Is there a mind of priceless worth,
Whose teachings are not those of earth ?
Is there a face and form whose dower,
Speaketh of Eden's perfect bower ?
That form, that mind, we surely see,
The first on Heaven-born wing to flee,
Where ev'ry sight and sound is blest,
And nought can jar th' all-perfect rest !

And Zebee's lustrous deep blue eye,
Seemed made for Eden's brighter sky ;
At times it shone with fiery hue,
At times it pierced a sightless view ;
'Twas lit as with a brilliant spark,
She watched the gay, the happy lark,
Higher and higher wing its flight,'
Floating in rich ethereal light !

'Twas calm and placid as a lake,
Soft as the falling snowy flake,—
While listening to those words of peace,
“ My love to you can never cease.
In the dark valley you will find,
That I illuminate the mind ;
I am your Sun, your Shield, your Stay,
Fear nothing, for *I* lead the way.”

Her wavy hair, which shone as gold,
Brought to our mind the nymphs of old ;
The rose and lily vied with grace,
To paint their hues upon her face ;
And yet this loveliness was not
That which sustains an earthly lot ;
The spirit rarified the shell,
Impatient up above to dwell.

A little boy sat at her feet,
Who rose to offer me a seat ;
He placed a chair with weirdish grace,
And viewed me with a solemn face.
I ne'er beheld so strange a child,
Witching his tones, his manners mild ;
A babe in years, a man in thought,
His spirit seemed with wonder fraught.

Upright and motionless he stood,
Gazing anon upon the wood
That skirted the bright sunny bay,
The fairy haunts where children play ;
Anon upon the book I read,
To soothe his sister's dying bed ;
Anon upon that sister fair,
Whose solitude he loved to share.

The child perplexed me,—but the power
That circumscribes a dying hour,
Hushed every thought with *life* allied,—
Zebee and Death were side by side !
“Are you,” I asked, “content to go,
And leave all worldly ties below ?
So young, are you prepared to die,
And meet your Maker in the sky ?”

"Oh, yes!" she sweetly smiled and said,
"With roses fair my bed is spread;
I often long to fly away,
And leave grim suffering and decay:
But though without a single fear,
I'd stay my parents' heart to cheer,—
I'd linger on a little space,
To see dear Jasper take my place !

But when this sorrow is o'erpast,
And I have reached my home at last,
I feel we never can be twain,—
Jasper and I will meet again.
We often speak of that bright land
We would have marched to hand in hand,—
But I must cross the stream ere noon,
Though Jasper will be crossing soon."

We parted,—ne'er to meet again,
In scene of sunshine or of rain;
Her spirit winged its upward flight
To regions of eternal light!
The Father, absent all the day,
At night would sometimes wend his way,
To gaze upon her quiet grave,
Lulled by the rippling of the wave.

Jasper would strew the grassy mound,
With flow'rets bright which grew around ;
And there he'd sit with tearful eye,
And ask himself, "When shall *I* die ?"
But Jasper's time had not yet come,
The desert lay 'twixt him and home;
His Mother first descried the hand
Which pointed *him* to yonder land.

The little boy was eight years old,—
 Cast in a strange, mysterious mould ;
 Brave as a lion, nought could fear,
 And much could bear without a tear.
 Taciturn and laconic, he
 Seemed often in a reverie,
 His countenance so fair to view,
 His honest eyes so brightly blue.

His Mother faded day by day,
 As lovely roses pass away ;
 While Jasper's grave and solemn care,
 Made every fleeting hour seem fair.
 The old, by sharp experience taught,
 Know how life's battle should be fought ;
 But early youth rarely imbibes
 The truths to which old age subscribes.

One day the Mother softly said,
 “ Dear Jasper, when I'm gone, am dead,
 I wish to leave one rule behind,
 Which you must ever bear in mind :
COURT NOT APPLAUSE, AND FEAR NOT MAN,
BUT WORK UPON THIS SINGLE PLAN,—
DO ONLY RIGHT, COST WHAT IT MAY,
AND NEVER FEAR WHAT PEOPLE SAY !

God's word will teach you all you need,
 To that, and *that alone*, give heed ;
 God cannot change,—but fitful man
 Changes with every changing plan.
MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS, AND BE WISE
FOR SELF, THEREIN YOUR WISDOM LIES ;
AND THEREFORE LET YOUR MOTTO BE,
‘ I DO ALL FOR ETERNITY ! ’ ”

And Jasper looked with speaking eye,
And said, " I'll try your rule, I'll try."
When autumn leaves their eddies whirled,
Grim Death his summons black unfurled ;
And Jasper and his Father laid
Their treasure 'neath the churchyard shade ;
While Jasper lingered longer there,
And doubled now his roses fair.

The boy was only eight years old,
But much he loved the churchyard cold ;
He sat beside the silent graves,
And listened to the rolling waves.
His Father's Master passed one day,
And heard the little fellow say,
" I'll be the man that duly kept
The rule She gave me ere she slept ! "

The Master fancied much the boy,
With look of sharp engrossing joy ;
" Come hither, little man," he said,
" Your spring of life hath quickly fled,
If you aspire to man's estate,
Although you are not more than eight."
Jasper, with cap in hand, seemed wrought
Up to the pitch of highest thought.

" You go to school, my bonnie lad ? "
" Yes, Sir ! " he said, in accents glad.
" Would you," rejoined the Master kind,
" In leisure moments pleasure find,
By running errands for the Hall,
Or answering my steward's call ?
A little money thus you'd earn,
To you, no doubt, a good return."

Emphatically Jasper said,
“ Yes, Sir! ” and bowed his youthful head.
Thus after school hours every day,
To Harkworth Hall he bent his way ;
And there obtained a goodly name,
The harbinger of future fame.
He followed in his Mother’s ways,—
And gained from each employer praise.

But earthly landscapes shift and pass ;
To day we tread on well trimmed grass,—
To-morrow we may grope and wade
Through lonely bogs in dusky shade.
At Harkworth stables dwelt a boy
For whom some demon found employ ;
A slimy snake, whose seeming good
Concealed a crafty vicious mood.

The demon tossed him skeins of thread
Hopelessly tangled,—while he fed
His pride, bidding him disentwine
The strange confusion line by line.
Thus for expectant gain he toiled,—
Too often goodlier tasks despoiled ;
But ever made the worst appear
The better cause when viewed anear.

And now this youth worked out a plan,
Unworthy of a boy or man,
To ruin Jasper in the race,—
Thinking thereby to gain his place.
Hard by the Hall an orchard bright,
Presented an alluring sight
Of golden apples,—Pippins rare,
And tended with the choicest care.

The orchard wall not being high,
The gardener kept a watchful eye
Upon a crop that this year won
The prize, and other crops outshone.
At night he placed a wary spy,
The lightest footstep to descry;
And notice give, if any sought,
To thin the boughs so richly fraught.

One Autumn eve when all was still,
The moon concealed behind the hill,—
A gentle and uncertain tread
Resounded near the apples red.
Quietly Smith, the watcher, crept,
To tell the gardener, who slept;
The gardener, armed to meet his foe,
Grinned with a fiend's exultant glow!

They watched the wicked stable-boy
Denude a branch, and then destroy
It hurriedly, as if in fear,
That it might evil tidings bear:
His pockets full, he now outspread
Upon the grass a kerchief red;
Filled it with apples from the tree,
And hasted, blanched by fear, to flee.

The culprit thought the feat well done,
The battle fought, the victory won;
Alas! it never crossed his mind
That he had left his knife behind.
They viewed the boy with fleetness pass
The Church, and cut across the grass
To Jasper's lodge, where dark'ning night
Concealed him from their distanced sight.

The wily gardener willed to see
 The end of this vile treachery,—
 He knew the youth, and knew the hate
 That he to Jasper bore of late.
 To Smith he said, “ We'll silence hold,
 And follow out this action bold ;
 We'll bait our trap, arrange our snare,
 And catch our bird with breathless care ! ”

Next day bad William spread abroad,
 That Jasper stole the fruit to hoard ;
 Late yester-eve himself had seen
 Some urchins pilfering on the green.
 But fearing to be classed among
 The youthful thieves by spiteful tongue,
 For recognition would not stay,
 But swiftly bent his homeward way.

At Jasper's lodge the stolen prize
 Would meet their unbelieving eyes.
 The steward went to see the tree,
 And sent for Jasper angrily.
 “ Jasper,” he said, “ I thought we knew,
 In you a worthy lad and true;
 How great will be the Master's grief
 To know so young a boy a thief ! ”

You sought the orchard late last night,
 And lingered till the morning light.”
 Jasper stood upright as a dart,
 He coloured not, he did not start,—
 His look was one of pure disdain,
 Contempt had left no place for pain.
 The wordless humour past, he said,
 “ It boots not who these lies have spread.

I mind my business, nothing fear,
While I do right in my career.”
The Master learnt the sad report,—
Jasper, with fallen vizage, sought;
And calmly asked, “ Has early youth
Already left the paths of truth?
Was it for this I brought you here,
To aid you in a higher sphere!

Can it be true, my boy, you steal ?
I to your honour now appeal.”
Said Jasper, “ Sir, I well can brook
The fervour of your searching look;
I mind my business, do my best,
And ever leave to God the rest! ”
The Squire replied, “ Then come with me,
We'll seek the Lodge in company!

If there I golden pippins find,
From whence they come must be assigned.”
And Jasper went without a care,
Fetterless as the morning air.
The Lodge now reached, the Master found
His golden apples strewn around ;
“ Your theft,” he said, “ appears revealed,—
How come these pippins here concealed ? ”

The boy replied, “ My sole defence
Is knowledge of my innocence !
These apples, Sir, I placed not here,
Your anger therefore do not fear.”
“ Jasper,” the Squire rejoined, “ All sin
Little by little doth begin ;
Confess your fault, your ways amend,
And I will stand your staunchest friend.

How came these apples hid away ?
 Speak up, my lad, what can you say ? ”
 Jasper with stern unfaltering eye
 Replied, “ I *never* tell a lie !
 Of all this fruit I nothing know,—
 Therefore, Sir, frankly tell you so.
 I fear not you or any man,
 Because I work upon *a plan.* ”

The Master was of gentle mood,
 A temperate man and wisely good ;
 So now he added nothing more,
 But left the house, and closed the door.
 While musing sadly on the past,
 With darkened brow, and overcast,—
 The gardener doffed his hat, and said,
 “ My steps in quest of you are led.

Sir, I desire that you should know
 The truth of what occurred below.
 The thief is William,—late last night
 We watched the boy by lantern light ;
 I and old John both saw him go
 To Jasper’s Lodge,—no doubt to stow
 The stolen apples there away,
 And all the blame on Jasper lay.

The freak played out I willed to see,—
 And therefore made old John agree
 To hold strict silence on the theft ;
 Although his knife behind he left.
 There’s no mistake about it, Sir,
 We did not make the slightest stir,
 But long we watched the wicked boy
 Those apples steal, that branch destroy.”

That evening Jasper stood again
Before the Squire,—whose altered strain
Rejoiced his heart, and fired his soul,
With feelings he could scarce control.
“ Jasper,” he said, “ the chosen few
That keep the narrow gate in view,
Had need indeed be free from guile,—
Their choicest good THE MASTER’S smile.

My boy, it surely seems to me
That *you* are of that company.
Will you to me, as to a friend
Who hates to blame, loves to command,
Confide the working PLAN, the aim,
Whereby so rich a peace you claim ?
Your heart is quite replete with joy,
That nought can touch and nought destroy ! ”

Then Jasper’s brave young heart of steel,
That knew not fear, and yet could feel,—
Indited now the words that fell
Upon his Master as a spell !
“ Sir, if you ask a simple fact,
This is the rule on which I act,—
I mind my business in God’s way,
And never fear what people say ! ”

The Squire at this brave answer smiled
Benignantly upon the child ;
He said, “ And where was this rule gained,
That has by you so well remained ? ”
“ It was, Sir, by my Mother giv’n,
Before she went to live in heav’n ;
She told me I must do my best,
And ever leave to God the rest ! ”

"Now," said the Squire, "I have a plan
To aid you also if I can ;
I wish to place you at a school,
Where learning mostly is by rule :
What do you say to this *my* scheme,
Which I for you so useful deem ?"
Young Jasper's bosom seemed to swell
With gratitude he could not tell !

He answer made, "Sir, I desire
Only to do what you require ;
But if you place me at a school,
Too gladly would I learn by rule !"
"Well, then, my boy, next week you go,
The Master said in accents slow,
To see if Jasper meant it so ;
But Jasper only bowed quite low.

Next week the lad was sent to school,
And with him went his foremost rule ;
The rule that linked him with success,
And made his daily happiness.
This major precept taught the way
Each minor order to obey ;
Life's ladder with applause he climbed,
And many idlers left behind.

But those who serve their God below,
Find that like body, faith must grow ;
God gives no grace he does not try,
His own great name to glorify !
The wicked, envious of the good,
Have ever been since Noah's flood ;
In ev'ry age, in ev'ry clime,
'T will be so to the end of time.

There were of Jasper's comrades, those
He least suspected,—secret foes ;
Whose leader, captain of the band,
On lesser boys had tried his hand
With great success,—so now he flew
At higher game,—but little knew
That Jasper owned a lion's heart,
A wrestler trained to act his part.

Both were contending for a prize,*
Each viewing each with rival eyes.
Small sums were wagered on the race.
And evil passions found their place.
The elder candidate for fame,
Mistook the value of a name ;
And gained repute by means of stealth,
Robbing a lesser boy of wealth.

The skulking villain well supplied
With malice, but with nought beside,
Obtained of Jasper's desk the key,—
Ensconcing there most treacherously
The stolen gains,—folding the ends
Of letters, from his many friends,
Around the gold, that glittering prize,
From whence a better should arise !

Next day arose a hue and cry!
The Doctor's disapproving eye
Fell on each boy as falls a blight,—
Sternly severe its darkening light.
His portly, tall, majestic form,
As thunder cloud before a storm,
Blacker and blacker seemed to grow,
Casting a shade on all below.

* The Good Conduct Prize.

And first the Doctor asked alone,
 Each boy of that which none had done ;
 Each one most solemnly denied
 Himself with this sad theft allied.
 " Now for the desks,"—the Doctor called,
 And every boy appeared appalled.
 Full well they knew he ne'er revoked
 The punishment a deed invoked.

Sternly severe, though strictly just,
 He treated every boy on trust ;
 But where that trust was once mis-placed,
 The boy was sure to be disgraced.
 A man well practised in the art
 That deeply reads the human heart :
 But with all vices he could treat
 More leniently than with deceit.

This fact the boys in deepest awe,
 Had learned from all they heard and saw,
 And trembled as the sentence fell,
 " The guilty one I shall expel."
 The desks were brought,—Jasper's came last.
 And every boy now stood aghast !
 The Doctor was as one unnerved,
 And well nigh from his purpose swerved.

At length he said, " Jasper have you
 Thus suddenly become untrue ?
 Full well I know you could not pay
 Some trivial sum but yesterday !"
 Jasper with calm undaunted mien,
 Resolute, fearless, and serene,
 Answered with grandeur in the tone,
 As one who stood and stands alone.

"The revelation hurts my pride,
 But it can nothing hurt beside ;
 A foe hath made me hopeful game,
 But he that sows shall reap the same."
 The Doctor said, "That will not do.
 You are expelled,—to-morrow go ;
 A better reason I demand,
 You'll quit the school by my command."

Thus Jasper, with respectful grace,
 Bowed as he left his wonted place.
 When every boy with one accord,
 Prayed the stern man to change his word ;
 Who answer made, with strong control,
 For sorrow touched his human soul,
 "I gave him time the sin to own,
 And therefore cannot now condone."

So Jasper left the school next day,
 But, strange to say, he still seemed gay !
 His *Father* shed some bitter tears,
 But Jasper said, "I have no fears ;
 When people take their *God* as guide,
 They'd better not by *halves* confide ;
 I mind my business in God's way,
 And never fear what people say."

No longer could the Squire uphold,
 And *so-called* friends at home grew cold ;
 They looked askance, and passed him by,
 Rejoicing, while they drew a sigh :
 And village groups would congregate
 To gossip of his altered fate.
 "We knew," they said, "the Master's scheme
 Would melt away as melts a dream,

But little guessed a theft so base
 The pampered favourite would disgrace ! ”
 And then they raised their eyes to Heaven,
 And prayed the crime might be forgiven :
 Oblivious of the startling fact,
Theirs was the sin without the tact ;
 For in the measure that we mete
 Shall our own vessel be replete.

Jasper, when summoned to the Hall,
 Obeyed at once the Master’s call !
 Who said, with deep and troubled sigh,
 “ Now, Jasper, *think*, ere you reply :
 I will a Father’s help extend,
 And still remain your truest friend,
 If you but own your fallen fame,
 And promise to retrieve the same.”

Jasper exclaimed, with fearless truth,
 In all the beauty of his youth,
 “ Sir, of this gold I nothing know,
 And therefore frankly tell you so ;
 I mind my business in God’s way,
 And never fear what people say.”
 The interview was very sad,
 For Jasper was a worthy lad.

Poor boy ! his steps were often led
 To hold communion with the dead ;
 He pondered on his mother’s rule,
 Gravely reviewed his fate at school ;
 Thought of his beauteous sister’s face,
 That beamed each day with lovelier grace,—
 And last, not least, remembered too,
 The mighty things his God could do.

He'd seen his sister's spirit rise
Above her sufferings to the skies ;
He'd seen his mother live and die
Joyfully with her Saviour nigh ;
He'd read of all the saints of old,
Their giant faith, their victories bold ;
And then he thought, " Am I afraid,
When Abram's God is here to aid ? "

One day, while near his Mother's tomb,
Beneath the yew-tree's shady gloom,
A tuneful voice he heard, which said,
" Linger not, Jasper, with the dead !
My boy, at length, I've learnt the truth,
As have the comrades of your youth ;
A death-bed fear could not conceal
That which God destined to reveal !

Dobson by spite was led astray,
Thinking sin's path a flow'ry way ;
But found the fearful weight of crime,
Increase but with increasing time !
A sudden fever cut him down,
As grass in summer time is mown ;
And ere the short-lived flower fell,
He told me all, as now I tell."

Jasper, the statue of repose,
Hitherto cold as falling snows,
With strong emotion seemed to glow,
And large, round tears began to flow ;
His tongue essayed, but could not speak,
A burning red inflamed his cheek ;
He leant against his Mother's tomb,
And felt her spirit in the gloom.

The Master spake with tenderness
 That one may feel, but ill express.
 Jasper remained entranced,—transfixed ;
 Pleasure and pain so strangely mixed.
 The Father tears of honest pride
 Wept, as but few could weep beside ;
 Too thankful now to see the close
 Of such unprecedented woes.

The Doctor would his steps retrace,—
 And with a ready writer's grace,
 Besought of Jasper to return,
 Once more the Conduct Prize to earn.
 But Jasper, with discretion sound,
 Refused again to tread the ground :
 The lesson learnt, the wounded mind
 Too gladly leaves the scene behind.

The Master now proposed to send
 The boy to study with a friend ;
 From thence with profit for a space
 Some quiet College Hall to grace.
 And Jasper took the same old rule
 To Cambridge that he took to school:
 It gave him dignity and ease,
 E'en with the men he failed to please.

The College idlers sought his time ;
 Idleness, Jasper viewed as crime.
 "You book-worm saint," they said, "you'd blame
Us, by your mawkish, cantish fame!"
 But Jasper said, "It's nought to *ME*,
 YOUR life or death eternally!
 'Tis true that *I* strive to be wise
 For self,—therein my wisdom lies."

The Master now matured a scheme,
That long had been a cherished dream,
Adopting Jasper as his son,
For many College honours won :
And to the Father he assigned
A pretty house and farm combined,
Where he might end his peaceful days,
His son his pride, his God his praise.

But as an old transplanted flower,
Whose roots may wither any hour,
He took not kindly to the soil,
That eased him of a work-day toil.
He sat beneath the lime-tree's shade,
Where bees their lulling music made ;
The rose and honeysuckle twined,—
But brighter thoughts were left behind.—

Save those fair visions of the dawn,
The glorious Resurrection morn,
Which should unite him with his wife,
His child, and all he loved in life ;
And bring again 'neath happier skies,
The echoing notes of melodies
That faintly, sadly met his ear,
Now that his loved ones were not here.

As time its units wiled away,
Jasper became his Master's stay ;
His rule at College proved his guard,
And brought him in a rich reward.
Respected now on ev'ry side,
His Patron's confidant and guide ;
The Bachelor's adopted son,
Who many College honours won !

One day, while walking by the sea,
 The Master came up hurriedly.
 " Jasper," he said, " I'm growing old,
 And would to you my plans unfold.
 I long have watched your bright career,
 No son could be to me more dear!
 Your noble love of right, *as right*,
 Will prove your glory in the fight.

This morning I my will have signed,
 And at my death to you assigned
 My property, where'er it be,
 As by this duplicate you'll see.
 Let it be secret as the grave,
 Ill-will I do not care to brave;
 I'm forced to hurry home to-day,
 But read it carefully I pray."

Jasper looked after him again,
 Scarce could the falling tears restrain ;
 Reviewed each former scene of joy,
 As now the man, and not the boy !
 Body and soul he felt expand
 To magnify the promised land ;
 And with a mystic thrilling glow,
 He deemed himself a prince below !

He gazed upon the ocean wide,
 And thought of manhood yet untried ;
 The parchment read with trembling hand,
 That made him monarch of the land !
 His contemplation so profound,
 He scarcely heeded sight or sound ;
 When twilight told of passing day,
 And sent him on his homeward way.

That night, intoxicating sleep,
Of mingled happiness and grief,
He slept,—but with the breaking morn,
Fresh did his heaven-born nature dawn.
“ There is an heir,” he said, “ and I
Must act as for Eternity !
A distant cousin though he be,
I must not own this property.

Time is too short for this mistake,
From heav’ly glory it will take !
Not for a day of earthly light,
Would I in aught my future blight.
From babyhood and youth have I,
Done all things for Eternity !
And tempted now by passion’s power,
Shall I so fall in one brief hour ? ”

The document he safely placed,
Where all his treasures were encased ;
And then, with self-collected mien,
Hast’ning towards the Hall was seen.
Jasper, the Master sought, and told,
In accents plain, unfalt’ring, bold,
That as his motto, so was he,—
“ I do all for Eternity !

Therefore, I must not own this land,
Bequeathed me by your loving hand.”
The Master spake in angry haste,
To see his wishes thus laid waste:
Ill could he brook the sudden blast
Of all he’d settled in the past ;
The rising blood now proved too strong,—
“ Jasper,” he said, “ you’re in the wrong !

I give a parent's love *to you*,
From you expect obedience due ;
 Why will you therefore hesitate
 To own from me so rich a fate ? ”
 Jasper said, “ Sir, what you demand,
 That I would view as a command !
 To give you pleasure, save you pain,
 Must be my highest worldly gain.

But, Sir, I am not *wholly* free,—
 One path alone belongs to me !
 I must do right, cost what it may,
 And never fear what people say.
 I'd sooner gain your earthly frown,
 Than lose by you a heavenly crown ;
 My love, my trust, my all, is given
 To you, but not my future Heaven ! ”

“ Well,” said the Squire, “ then I'll destroy
 This will by your desire, my boy.
 Ten thousand pounds, I'll only leave !
 Methinks o'er that you will not grieve.”
 And Jasper's calm though grateful love,
 An emanation from above,
 Made answer, “ Sir, long may it be,
 Ere your kind gift is owned by me.”

This settled, Jasper not again
 Dwelt on that first will by the main,
 Which *then* he thought to put away
 Never to see the light of day.
 And weeks, and months, and years rolled on,
 And Jasper was to him a son !
 But the sad, fearful word, *Farewell*,
 One day, alas ! too darkly fell.

There was no parting, no regret,
So suddenly his sun had set !
An angel softly veiled his eyes,
And opened them in Paradise.
But Jasper yearned for that *last word*,
Which, like a voice from Heaven, is heard ;
That word which frames the link unseen
Our loved ones and ourselves between.

Thrice happy man, gone safely home !
While Jasper here below must roam,
Nor settle down in earthly nest,
But wait for his celestial rest.
Poor boy ; he felt so strangely lone,
The day the cold damp dust was thrown
Upon the last reposing shell
Of him he'd loved on earth so well.

Prepare we all for that dark hour !
For then we need Almighty power,
To pierce the blackness of the tomb,
And rise superior to its gloom.
Jasper intently viewed the heir,
The kinsman *called* chief mourner there :
A feeble man of feeble soul,
Thinking himself a mighty whole !

When fortune falls on divers men,
'Tis strange to note their varying ken,—
Some by prosperity are tried,
Others by sorrow purified.
There are new coins with beauty graced,
And coins degenerate and debased ;
But each, and all have place below,
For God has willed and wills it so.

Jasper well knew the will had given
 The kinsman that for which he'd striven :
 By crooked ways and manifold,
 He'd sought to gain his cousin's gold.
 Now all was his,—save the small share
 Jasper demanded of the heir.
 Ten thousand pounds has rarely brought
 A destiny so strangely fraught !

For a brief space he nothing said ;
 But when his friend was three months dead,
 His claim he hasted to make known,—
 And was received with look of stone.
 The kinsman said, “ I disallow
 A claim I never heard till now !
 My cousin left no will, and I
 Your idle wants will not supply ! ”

Jasper replied, “ That will not do,
 My claim is just and righteous too.
 So this day month the money pay,
 Or you will rue th' unlucky day.”
 “ Out of my house this moment go,
 Or *yours* will be the day of woe ! ”
 The cousin answer to him made,—
 And Jasper quietly obeyed.

Election day was near at hand,
 And every vote was in demand.
 Two ancient foes were in the field,
 And neither candidate would yield.
 The kinsman boasting of success,
 Wasted his time in idleness ;
 While others canvassed for the prize,
 And gained the start with eager eyes.

Procrastination and its cost,
 Aroused his fears by favours lost ;
 And yet, he thought, a ten pound note
 May prove a wondrous antidote !
 Through Jasper's farm his circuit lay,
 He filled his purse, to pay his way,—
 In lieu of babes he kissed the cat,
 And like a cringing monkey sat.

“ You have no lease, but I can give
 One that will last you while you live :
 So have no fear upon that score,—
 Haply you'd ask for something more ?
 Knowing that I your vote possess,
 I will not lay an undue stress ;
 My steward shall the lease arrange,
 You will not suffer by the change.”

And Jasper's Father boldly said,
 “ It matters not where my poor head
 Lies low at last,—but, Sir, I've given
 My vote to Mr. White of Leven.”
 The kinsman said, “ Retract your word,
 I am your master now, and lord.
 Confront not then my power, and bring
 Upon yourself a needless sting.”

And Jasper's Father said, “ I'm old,
 But ne'er, Sir, broke my word for gold ;
 I've served my God for many a year,—
 Will serve Him still without a fear.
 If 'tis your will that I should quit,
 Well, then, Sir, I submit to it !
 But not for you, or any man,
 Will I work on the devil's plan.”

The kinsman ill concealed his rage—
 Sharply withdrew his patronage,
 And rising quickly from his chair,
 Departed with a vicious glare.
 Notice to quit was served next day,
 And three short months would end his stay!
 The old man took it not to heart,
 He'd well-nigh played *his* earthly part.

Ere six weeks of the time had flown,
 God called his chosen servant home;
 And earthly huts but ill compare,
 With the bright mansions found up there!
 And now a single week remained,
 Before the legacy was claimed;
 It slowly wore itself away,
 And then arrived the signal day.

Two lawyers waited at the Hall,
 The kinsman answered to the call;
 They said, “Your day of grace is flown,
 Unless you pay this money down;
 A lawsuit we to-day commence,
 And you, we fear, have no defence;
 We will not listen to delay,
 The money must be paid to-day.”

The cousin said, “There is no claim,
 By marriage, birth, or even name!
 I am the heir, the next-of-kin,
 And certainly will not give in.
 No will was left, and therefore I
 Am lord of all this property.”
 They hurried off without delay,
 To London quickly made their way.

Foolishly had the cousin dared
 To burn the second will, that shared
 With Jasper some of this great wealth,—
 Making away with it by stealth.
 So Jasper now brought forth the will,
 That made *him* lord of dale and hill!
 The verdict in his favour given,
 As by the justice strict of Heaven.

The luckless kinsman thus laid claim
 To endless misery and shame,—
 The shame that brings so foul a scorn
 A man regrets he e'er was born!
 A foreign land became his tomb,
 His memory engraved in gloom;
 A shudder passes o'er the frame
 Upon the mention of his name!

Broad acres of the verdant sod,
 O'er which his youthful feet had trod,
 Owned Jasper, lord,—hailing the day
 That gave to him the rightful sway.
 Success intoxicated not,
 The golden rule he ne'er forgot:—
 He that serves God in *little* ways,
 Is sure to know of *greater* days!

He married well,—daily would raise
 To God above his voice of praise;
 His children, ere they lisped his name,
 Knew the great rule that brought him fame;
 And in a childish, plaintive note,
 He often heard its fragments float:—
 “ MIND YOUR OWN BUSINESS IN GOD'S WAY,
 AND NEVER FEAR WHAT PEOPLE SAY! ”



APRICOT GOLDING

OR

SUNNYSIDE.

WAS a traveller, to see
The beauties of our Western coast,
The woods, the rivers, hills, and dales,
That Wales and Devonshire can boast ;
And wearied by the hurried change,
I staid awhile my rapid flight,
And in a lovely village paused,
To feast my spirit with delight.

On sunny days we scaled the heights,
And rested on the heathery rock,—
Colored by lichen, decked with fern,
Where red grouse and the moor fowl flock.
And as we climbed, I loved to gaze
Adown the river's graceful wind ;
Wondering withal if water nymphs
Might hold communion with mankind !

Bespangled were the cottages,
As daisies on the emerald plain ;
And boys and girls, with shouts of mirth,
Were gathering blackberries in the lane.
The lark was trilling overhead,
The blue bells nodding in the breeze,
While nectar from the purple thyme,
Was quaffed by drowsy mountain bees.

The lady-bird, in scarlet dress,
Flitted anon from flower to flower,
And burnished beetles, green and gold,
Disported in the azure hour.
Silken-winged flies, orange and blue,
Hovered around a trickling stream,
And gay coquetting butterflies,
Danced in the sun's inspiring beam.

The lizard rustling in the grass,
Steering its way through gorse and heather ;
The ring-dove cooing in the wood,
The halcyon-bird of brilliant feather ;
Creation's vari-coloured glows
Flung their soft radiance o'er the scene,
And for a space imparadised,
With Eden-joy serene.

While thus reclining in delight,
A little cottage I espied,—
Part hidden by the old grey Church,
And very near the river's side.
It shone in calm and bright repose,
Enwreathed in flowers of brilliant hue ;
And Heaven's great dome above it seemed
A deeper and a richer blue.

A floweret among the flowers,
It well attracted every eye ;
And tourists paused, as quite averse
To pass this little Eden by.
“ Whose,” I remarked, “ is that gay bower ?
A Persian garden in its way !
So dream-like and so softly bright,
Methought in fairy-land it lay.”

And thus my Friend,—“ Within that bower
 Dwelt Apricot, our village pride ;
 Long has she left this nether scene,
 Yet there our rainbow lights abide.
 Methinks the atmosphere reflects
 A lovelier hue near that abode ;
 The lilies and the lemon flowers
 Gaze on blue skies without a cloud.

“ The river in its boundless flow
 Of gladness, crystalline and bright,
 Stays there to trace in diamond glow,
 Its constellations of delight.
 Her story is with interest fraught,
 I'll tell it as we upwards climb ;
 To be rehearsed in years to come,
 A legend of the olden time.

“ There dwelt amid this simple folk,
 In vanished days long past and gone,
 A tradesman whose ignoble name,
 Invoked a hushed and lowered tone.
 No living creature needed him,
 His presence stamped the word—BEWARE !
 The child by instinct held aloof,
 The aged sinner feared a snare.

“ Fierce and unscrupulous of soul,
 Uncouthly shaggy the outside,
 The nick-name of ‘ Old Bear ’ was his,—
 Thus was he known both far and wide.
 A dark-eyed man of darker deeds,
 One to the Prince of Darkness sold ;
 Yet so unskilful in his ways,
 His ransom easily were told.

“ A wife he owned, and child deformed,
 Shrouded in sadness from its birth :
 Whose plastic years were veiled in gloom,
 God’s morning star, his all on earth.
 This man in blind insensate rage,
 Threw down his little infant boy ;
 And from that day, by God’s decree,
 His life was one bereft of joy.

“ Some men complete their life designs,
 In shades and patterns all their own ;
 Others are wrathfully cut short,
 The weavers summoned to God’s throne.
 The ‘ Old Bear ’ met a sudden death,—
 But there was none to shed a tear ;
 A man of guilt had left this earth,
 And with his life had passed a fear.

“ The wearied wife, and injured son,
 As trodden grass raised by the gale,
 Beheld their grim oppressor gone,
 While yet stern habit made them quail.
 Young Ronald Golding was a bud
 That might in genial clime expand ;
 But hitherto fierce winter’s reign,
 Had sealed it with an icy hand.

“ Or on his unprotected head,
 The sun-stroke fell with scorching might ;
 When not congealed with Arctic cold,
 Life’s fever was at burning height.
 And habit in our early years
 Ever its impress leaves behind ;
 The former things are not effaced,
 In transformation of the mind.

“ Thus an ignoble, servile dread
 Remained to tell of causes past ;
 And Ronald shunned the village gaze,
 As fragile flowerets fear the blast.
 This sullen mood, and dismal mien,
 Invited no man to his side :
 The villagers all pitied him,
 And by their pity roused his pride.

“ Imagination’s brilliant world
 May be dis-peopled in a day !
 Its phantom favourites all unveiled,
 Its gods of gold all turned to clay.
 And in a night may emerald groves,
 And lakes of liquid silver rise,—
 While light-bespangled fairies dance
 On star-lit glades, ’neath sapphire skies.

“ These are the varying fates of earth ;
 ‘ *Change* ’ is our motto day by day,—
 Sunshine and rain, sorrow and joy,
 Are boon companions of the way.
 And it is well,—for each in turn
 Strew fairy gifts with diamonds crowned :
 While joy-stars set in black, bleak grief,
 Cast lovelier brilliancies around.

“ But now to Ronald there arose
 An Eden in the desert land ;
 A strange new light had crossed his path,
 A sunbeam shaped by mystic hand.
 Hard by, within a neighbouring farm,
 There dwelt a girl, fair Helen Leigh,—
 One of life’s joy-stars, whose deep source
 Lies high in Heaven’s eternity.

“ The fairy-boat that bore her life,
 Was launched upon a sunny sea ;
 And earth and sun, and moon and stars,
 Rang out their chaunts right joyously.
 But the grey helmsman’s piercing eye
 Presaged the storm would surely rise,—
 ‘ The boats that reach fair Canaan’s land
 Must track their course ‘neath wintry skies.’

“ These summer barks of glittering hope,
 Decked in their crystal morning sheen ;
 The silvery pennon tinged with rose,
 And margined with the tenderest green,—
 It is these fragile ocean stars,
 These lucent shells of fairy light,
 That first unravel with the gales,
 And fray beneath their spoiling might.

“ Upon her birth had fortune shone,—
 With golden stars her Father’s sky
 Was studded,—but he suffered loss,
 And proved his silver vanity.
 No little speck small as a hand
 Appeared to warn of the event :
 With startling haste, in mid-day blue,
 The lowering gloomy clouds were sent.

“ But Helen’s finely balanced mind,
 Prosperity might not elate ;
 Nor would she pine in dark despair,
 When sorrow brought a changing fate.
 Ronald’s distress, at her approach,
 Dissolved into a peaceful calm,—
 And every poignant ache and grief,
 Would find in her a sheathing balm.

“ She fostered many lovely thoughts,
 His leaden sky with gladness lit ;
As some fair angel in our dreams,
 Around our midnight couch may flit.
Her flexible spirit curved itself
 To each succeeding shape of life ;
E'en now she had to earn her bread,
 And act the heroine in the strife.

“ Hard by she dwelt at Fernbrook Farm,
 Pleased with an uncle to reside :
Her wisdom, and her earnestness,
 The old man's daily joy and pride.
Over the drear and common place,
 Her spirit played with rainbow spray,
Spray that must e'er its level find,—
 And Helen's source in heaven lay.

“ The Nautilus in sunny grace,
 Fair Venus in the azure skies,
Might not float by with lovelier charms,
 Or solace in more witching guise.
Her's was a spirit satiate
 With Eden perfumed honey flowers ;
Scattering those flakes of fragrant light,
 That gild anew o'er-wearied hours.

“ In slavish chains had Ronald toiled,
 The village Lawyer's copying clerk ;
A prison-house his dreary room,
 Narrow and dismal, dank, and dark.
Hard was the Master, for he served
 A spirit harder than his own.
But the oppressor and oppressed,
 Will meet before God's Judgment Throne.

“ Fain in the stilly eventide,
 He sauntered forth to breathe the air ;
 While choosing unfrequented paths,
 Wrapped in dull thoughts of pain and care.
 Haply he met blythe Helen Leigh,
 Whose mind so graciously endued,
 Rejoiced his heart, and sent him back
 Less troubled to his solitude.

“ There are some heavenly natures here,
 With whom to meet is to be blessed ;
 'Tis well that they are strangely rare,
 Or earth would be our place of rest !
 They breathe sweet secrets of the land
 Where all is pure, and calm, and fair ;
 The moments lent are not in vain,—
 They lighten every earthly care.

“ On Sunday Ronald shunned the church,
 So thread-worn was his working dress ;
 Strolling by hill and ruined tower,
 The incarnation of distress.
 His languid spirit seemed to gain
 Endurance on the mountain's height ;
 The hills would whisper, ‘ Weary one,
 The morning cometh after night ! ’

“ Fair Helen at the close of church
 Guided her feet along the vale,—
 Knowing his solitary haunts,
 His dreary life's discordant tale.
 And in these bright meanderings,
 The music of her harmonies,
 Played as the wind-enchanted harp,
 His spirit echoing melodies.

“ Ronald had yet to earn his bread,—
Although his widowed mother drew
A yearly sum from one she'd served,
In early days, with service true.
But with life's close this income ceased,
And it was limited withal ;
Therefore she urged her son to save,
For spring-time we may not recall.

“ And weeks, and months, and years flew by,
Silently, stealthily, alone,—
Though each event engraved itself
In archives for the Great White Throne.
When one bright day in early spring
Helen became a happy wife,—
And Ronald saw his bluest sky
Arise from blackest clouds of strife.

“ We may not read the book of fate,
The future or the past of men ;
God keeps it sealed,—too high, too great
The knowledge for our mortal ken.
But each man's life is as a chain
Woven in links by power divine ;
And chain with chain God interweaves,
As tendrils in a vineyard twine.

“ Then ask not why stern fate decreed
That beauteous Helen, young and fair,
Should link the circlets of her life
With one injured to pain and care ?
The tarnished casket may enclose,
The jewel of the richest worth ;
While plainest forms full oft contain
The spirits never made for earth.

“ And here, in all our communings,
 ‘Tis mind that speaketh unto mind ;
Attraction and repulsion both
 Are witchcraft of the subtlest kind.
By inward living power, we turn
 The atmosphere and food to life,—
Thus may the Spirit’s essence be
 Strangely transfigured in the strife.

“ When Helen’s father died, he left
 His child the fortune he retrieved ;
And thus they built a small hotel,
 A cherished plan, and long conceived.
In laying out the garden site,
 Hope’s fairy visions floated by ;
For apricots at Sunnyside,
 Bloomed as beneath a magic sky.

“ The likelihood of golden gain,
 The fragrance of the outer air,
Translated to a Paradise,
 This brooding child of dark despair.
At all beginnings hearts beat high,
 Elastic youth is full of hope ;
None but the practised eye can draw
 The shadows in life’s horoscope.

“ These trees were sheltered by a wall
 From every gusty fitful gale :
At early morn, and dewy eve,
 Ronald would tell the self-same tale.
He tended them with keenest eye,
 With genial pride and sanguine heart ;
While chemistry might not compound,
 A richer soil with subtler art.

“ But, strange to say, the fruit produced
 Was not a luscious mellow kind ;
 Mildew or insects spoiled the crop,
 Marring the colouring of the rind.
 Or early frosts would check the growth,
 In spite of Ronald’s toil and thought ;
 And Helen more than once perceived
 His heart quite full with sorrow fraught.

“ And musical her serious tone,
 Golden the light in her soft eye,—
 As from her lips there fell the words,
 ‘Never despair beneath God’s sky !’
 When *Helen* said, ‘Never despair !’
 A glad content lit Ronald’s face ;
 So have I seen on stilly lake,
 A moonbeam light with tender grace.

“ He might not dive to her deep depths,
 Or scale her heights of bright ascent ;
 But he might gaze through rents and chinks,
 With wonder fraught, that God had lent
 So fair an Amaranth from His sky,
 Whose daily buds of loveliness,
 Unfolded as beneath His eye,
 In all the splendid consciousness.

“ Helen arranged a centre plot,
 Selecting hardy vigorous trees,
 Trellis-trained,—so that light and heat
 Might play their genial part with ease.
 This open trellis deftly gave
 The sunlight sway on either side ;
 And well each favourite thrived and grew
 To be that garden’s fairest pride.

“ Translucent was the lovely fruit
 Of richly bright flame coloured hue ;
 While soft delicious fragrances,
 Abroad their grateful odours threw.
 Thus when the mellowed Autumn came,
 And into amber glory burst,
 Each branch was freighted with its gold,
 And germs of gladness interspersed.

“ Ronald exclaimed, ‘ I pr’ythee tell
 The secret of our great success ?
 To me it seems a wizard’s spell
 That you, and you alone, possess !’
 Helen rejoined, in softest tone,
 ‘ Our God delights to answer prayer ;
 I claimed His promise,* and it brought
 That luscious fruit of beauty rare.’

“ Thus, from that day, these Apricots
 Excelled all others in the town ;
 Yearly they proved a source of gain,
 Daily they brought new blessings down.
 And now but one great wish remained,
 One dreary cloud o’erspread their sky,—
 They owned no merry Prattling child
 To soothe them with its minstrelsy.

“ Poor Ronald loved the children’s life,
 And often watched them when at play ;
 Their glowing mirth, their joyous dance,
 Gladdened him on the roughest day.
 His youth had been a frozen bud,
 A sapling of the arctic zone :
 His life juice but an icicle,
 On which no genial sun had shone.

*John xiv. 14.

“ When Helen, as the sweet warm dew,
 Descended on his blighted life,
 He caught her sparkling rainbow hue,
 With all the heat of sunlight rife.
 But then his early youth had passed,
 As one long season of despair;
 Nipt by the frosts, chilled by the winds,
 Or scorched beneath a fiery glare.

“ And Helen thought a budding life
 Would soothe the suffering God had given;
 Would, as the nightingale’s first notes,
 Awake the melodies of heaven.
 And thus they daily prayed that God
 Might grant their earnest wish in love,—
 A little while, He heard, and sent
 A God-like answer from above.

The fairest, loveliest little girl,
 Most weirdly beautiful and small;
 And it was christened Apricot,
 A name much welcomed by them all;
 It was the cheeriest, sunniest thing,
 That on our earthly pathway lay,—
 Methought at times, it surely owned
 Winglets of gauze to fly away.

“ At three years old its golden hair,
 Its speaking eyes so softly blue,
 Its fair complexion, tinged with pink
 That day by day more lovely grew.
 Its rose-bud mouth, its chiselled nose,
 Its strange unearthliness of mien,
 Were as the angel forms that flit
 In dreams, albeit rarely seen.

“ The touch that gave the master charm,
 The thrilling rapture of delight,
Caressing you, as sunbeams play
 With all their witching lovely light,—
Arose from reigning as a queen,
 Over a brilliant realm of thought,
Where scenes are dipped in Heavenly dyes,
 And with celestial beauty fraught.

“ This little creature loved the sun,
 With love so spiritually wild,
That when or sick, or sorry, it
 Appeared to me a fairy child.
It bathed itself in sunbeams bright,
 As water-lilies rocked and swayed
By fitful gusts, find their support
 And life, where others find their shade.

“ But this weird mystic harmony,
 Betwixt it and the golden sphere
Of light, that doth our earth illume,
 Was not revealed to any here.
Haply it viewed as in a glass,
 The Eternal Sun of Righteousness;
And by thus gazing at the light,
 Engraved its own strange loveliness.

“ Apricot’s parents early taught
 Their child to lisp God’s holy name ;
But she received each Bible truth,
 As one who long had known the same.
The thoughts seemed old,—the words were new,
 Causing at first perplexed surprise;
But as the words conveyed their sense,
 You saw the spirit’s self arise.

“ The skies appeared her native place,
 Her eye grew so intensely blue,
And every feature traced in light,
 More glittering than the morning dew.
She asked no questions of the land
 Where God, her Heavenly Father, dwelt;
But even when a tiny child,
 She always spake as one who felt.

“ She was a mystery to all,
 A sun-enchanted, crystal thing,
O'er which all nature tenderly
 Would spread its soft protecting wing.
The flowers, and birds, the leaves, and trees,
 Welcom'd her with a fond embrace ;
And everything that lived and breathed
 Blessed the glad sunshine of her face.

“ When Apricot was five years old,
 A rich old lady came to dwell
At Sunnyside,—seeking a house,
 She lived the while at the hotel.
When on the fairy child she gazed,
 A thrill of pleasure seemed to glow
Within the veins, that had become
 Stagnant through grief to joys below,

“ For she had given sunny ones
 Back to the fountain head of light,—
And now she was left all alone,
 With the sad memory of their flight.
This lovely child, so freshly fair,
 Greeted her sight one summer's day,—
Basking in sunshine on the grass,
 And catching every golden ray.

" And as she watched the little girl,
 Tear after tear descending fell ;
 For the last sunbeam of her life,
 Resembled Apricot too well !
 But it was rarely she allowed
 Dew-drops of grief to own their sway ;
 'My lovely ones,' she said, 'are housed,
 Where God doth wipe all tears away.'

" For long she only viewed the child,
 Tremulously with mournful eye ;
 But one bright day in solitude,
 Its silver voice of melody
 Allured her, as the Orphean lyre
 Entranced all nature by its spell,—
 For Apricot, in luscious tones,
 Was singing as a nightingale.

" ' You never can give what you take,
 Stand out of my sunshine, I pray,—
 For crystalline light from my home,
 Descends on the pure sunny ray !
 You never can give what you take,
 Stand out of my sunshine, I pray ;
 It gladdens my heart, and speaketh
 Of a brightness without decay ! '

" ' You little songster of the woods ! '
 The lady softly said, and smiled ;
 ' Shall I call you my fairy bird,
 Or my bright little elfin child ?
 Who taught you to sing as a lark,
 While winging its flight to the sky,
 With your trilling, your quiv'ring note,
 And your blue forget-me-not eye ? '

“ She answer made, ‘ I often sing,
 When I sit with the brilliant sun ;
 And he again whispers to me,
 Of the things he has seen and done.’
 And thus it was,—this creature fair,
 Sipped of the sun’s majestic light ;
 Transfigured by its radiancy,
 Its depth, its beauty, and its might.

“ The hidden mystery that dwelt
 Within this fresh and sparkling child,
 Lulled as a liquid melody,
 Ethereally, weirdly wild.
 And when in Apricot’s bright home,
 The lady’s destined time was spent,—
 She prayed that this Æolian harp,
 Might with its tuneful notes be lent.

“ She bought ‘ the Cottage of the Sun,’
 Wreathed in its dainty rainbow bloom ;
 Where Apricot, her Eden flower,
 Would as a far-off star illume.
 Helen, whose life was one of toil,
 Rejoiced in tender wise to see
 Her orange jasmine trained with grace,
 Replete with sunny fragrancy.

“ The lady loved the sparkling gush
 Of music fraught with tender strain ;
 The little heart was welling o’er,
 Its bird-like joy could not contain.
 Her simple frock of snow-drop white,
 With sash and bows of amber dye,
 Might symbolize devotion’s pledge
 To sunny golden purity.

“ The tracery so delicate,
 Gave an ethereal form and air,
Too fragile for this work-day world,
 With its diurnal fret and wear.
Ungentle, envious spirits said,
 The child was made of vulgar clay ;
And that its many lovely charms,
 As May’s soft pink would fade away.

“ But lives so fairly beautiful,
 Are swiftly gathered to God’s light !
He needs His best beloved ones,
 To fill His measure of delight.
Haply some mission in this world,
 Veiled her the while in earthly shape ;
For when you spake of heavenly things,
 A coronal of light would drape

“ Her lovely brow,—and through her eye
 Would flash a pure and glorious light,—
It was as if you’d touched a spring,
 And heaven had opened on her sight !
Her mind appeared a Paradise,
 Through which the loveliest lives would pass ;
Soft tones, delicious fragrances,
 And visions you could not surpass.

“ Unlike a child these deep bright thoughts,
 Played as the mystic sunbeams play.
Refraction made them seem quite near,
 But they were really far away.
Upon her listening ear one day,
 There fell a poor man’s tale of grief,—
Where fever was the ruthless scythe,
 And no bright sunbeams gave relief.

“ The reaper Death had laid the wife
Beneath the churchyard’s cold grey sod ;
She left two little sick ones here,
And two, we trust, she took to God.
Our beauteous fairy pined and drooped,
Our sunbeam in a shadow lay ;
They hovered round her favourite haunts,
But none her whereabouts could say.

“ A varied path to each assigned,
Long while they sought the elfin child,
To find her in the fever house,
With look so spiritually wild,
The Vicar paused in lingering awe,
Watching the curtain looped aside,—
Apollo’s child in glory wreathed,
Acting the young celestial guide.

“ ‘ I’m telling these children,’ she said,
As she sat on their fever bed,
‘ The story of two young eaglets,
That some time ago I had read.
Allured by undying brightness,
Both Faith and Mistrust winged their way,
To the gates of our grand old sun,
To sport in his life-giving ray.

“ Mistrust could only see the spots,
And regretted his weary flight ;
He viewed the sun as a dingy grey,
Like the darker shadows of night.
But Faith beheld the golden light
From Arcadia streaming through ;
And he tuned a hymn of glory
As he gained a triumphant view !

“ ‘ Mistrust, elate with sightless pride,
 Viewed not the grand or the sublime,
 Where King Apollo made his throne,
 In that far-off ethereal clime.
 But the King awarded to each,
 That which each one had willed to see ;
 To Faith he unlocked the heavens,
 With a sparkling diamond key !

“ ‘ But an ebony key brought forth,
 For the black subterraneous door
 Of Tartarus, in whose abyss,
 Long will Mistrust his fate deplore.
 It’s only a fable ! ’ she said,
 ‘ The story now is very old :
 But Christ, our Lord, when on this earth,
 Full many wondrous stories told.

“ ‘ He loved the faith that trusted all
 He ever did, or ever said,—
 And those who trusted most, gained most,
 As you have in your Bibles read.’
 The Vicar now appeared in sight,—
 And thus the words suspended, fell,
 ‘ Some future day, my little girl,
 You shall another story tell,’—

“ He said,—and led the wanderer back
 To her far brighter mountain home ;
 But angels leave a trail of light,
 A colouring of the heaven to come.
 None might by subtle questionings
 Explore the foliage of her mind ;
 A rock-rose* growing in a cleft,
 Fed by the dew, fanned by the wind.

* The Semper Viva, or ever-living rock-rose, has been lately on

“ But drawing not its sustenance
From earth,—its ever-living life,
From food that helps the meander plant,
To grow and flourish in the strife.
And very fair each clustering flower,
Shedding its fragrancy afar ;
Weighted with sunny loveliness,
And softly brilliant as a star.

“ One April day, in quest of rooms,
A gentleman at the hotel
Arrived,—a man of deep research,
Who could a strange experience tell.
A traveller in foreign lands,
Adventurous from early youth ;
On restless wing now here, now there,
He sought the pith of science,—truth.

“ Learned and accomplished in the arts,
Fastidious, sensitive, refined,—
Within whose soul the gross and low,
A resting-place might never find.
This year he sought at Sunnyside
Some curious plants and early flowers,
While antiquarian tastes were fed,
Amid its ruined feudal towers.

“ Also, well versed in passing things,
On this our sublunary earth ;
While herding with Philosophers,
He studied every book of worth.

exhibition at Cleveland, Ohio; it grows in clefts without earth. Its sustenance is drawn from the air and dews. It can be kept for months in a dry box without earth or water. It bears a cluster of delicate white or scarlet flowers once a year.

But he had not yet sought and found,
That which can *never* pass away ;
And often sighed, as if a load
Upon his wearied spirit lay.

“ Our Fairy Queen appeared one day,
Sunning herself upon the lawn ;
Her every action curved with grace,
Agile and lithesome as a fawn.
The old man seized his hat in haste,
All lovely forms rejoiced his eye,—
And nearing this most beauteous child
With face upturned towards the sky,

“ Exclaimed, ‘ My brilliant little maid,
What seek you in yon azure sky ?
This mid-day heat is far too fierce
For you, my golden mystery.
To shadier regions I would bear
My glistening bird of Paradise,
E’en fairies need their sheltering flowers
To veil them from these summer skies.’

“ The child replied, ‘ *I* need no flower
To come betwixt me and the sun !
The marvels of his travelling,
His works sublime, his victories won,
Are whispered softly in my ear,
And pictured in his woven light ;
Methinks you see not as *I* see,
Or you would own the strange delight.’

“ The gentleman in silence stood
Watching this portraiture divine ;
This Eden sprite of witching grace,
Round which the sunbeams loved to twine.

And lost in thought and reverie,
 He wandered towards a mossy dell,—
 A man grown grey in seeking truth,
 Entangled 'neath an infant's spell !

“ Vast are the mysteries science solves,
 And very deep its depths of lore ;
 Exhaustless are its mines of wealth,
 Year after year unfolding more,—
 Yet to its votaries and slaves
 Almighty God at times denies
 Knowledge divine,—Philosophy,
 That makes the learned man truly wise.

“ The Titan mind that spans the sky,
 Distancing other men in thought,—
 Bringing the far-off planets near,
 With all their wondrous grandeur fraught,—
 Hewing down trees of tropic height,
 Clearing the wastes for meaner men,—
 May be entangled in itself,—
 Failing thereby a deeper ken.

“ A dew-drop mindless of the sun,
 A fire-fly dazzled by its light,—
 A flower faint with its own charms,—
 Are symbols of a mental night
 That men mistake for noon-day skies ;
 Phosphoric vapours that illume
 Life's atmosphere a little space,
 Brightest before they set in gloom.

This old man hailed the faintest clue
 That led to his enchanted ground
 Discovery's land,—where many thoughts
 Are tested,—some with glory crowned.

And there he'd gained a mastery,
 Though challenged by the vulgar crowd.
 One in Invention's heptarchy,
 A mighty king by all allowed.

“ ‘ And am I baffled by a child ! ’
 He spake aloud in musing thought.
 ‘ My telescopes may sweep the spheres,
 My microscopes have wonders wrought !
 My learning has enriched the world,—
 And yet I shall bequeath a store,—
 For buds of knowledge day by day
 Unfold their beauties more and more.

“ ‘ But intellectual lore has bounds
 That no frail mortal may surpass ;
 I find this child a mystery,
 And see but darkly in a glass.
 Whence springs that self-sustaining joy,
 As though external things were lined
 With all-sufficient views of God,
 To which mere worldly men are blind ?

“ ‘ The ruffling weariness of life,
 Passes her by as one unknown ;
 God’s visible protection seems
 Over that fair one softly thrown.
 Deeper than child’s philosophy,
 Than lore of sages worldly wise,
 Who make their learning foolishness,
 Veiling their Maker in His skies.’

“ From time to time the grave old man
 Made her his study for the hour ;
 Eager, by calculating thought,
 To gain the secret of her power.

One day, with mournful look, he sought
 To penetrate her youthful breast,
 And learn whence sprang the mystic calm,
 The orient splendour of her rest.

“ With subtle instinct, she forestalled ;
 ‘ And are the plants *so* hard to find ?
 Or, with my Father, do you feel
 Chilled by this cold and wintry wind ? ’
 ‘ The plants,’ he said, ‘ *are* hard to find,
 For they are not as yet in bloom,—
 And only fairies are exempt
 ‘ When north-east winds cast forth their gloom.’

“ “ But tell me what it is *you* seek,—
 Do sun-flowers grow in yonder skies ?
 Or is your favourite almond blossom
 Revealed to nymphs with large blue eyes ? ’
 ‘ No,’ she replied, ‘ a fading flower
 Would not repay my thought and care :
 I am a honey seeking bee,
 And I would not impart my share.’

“ “ Weary I am, and very cold,—’
 In coaxing tones, the old man said ;
 ‘ Oh ! let me taste your honey-comb,
 And with your luscious food be fed ! ’
 Naïvely fair Apricot rejoined,—
 ‘ And wherefore do you seek *your* flowers ?
 Endangering life and limb at times,
 By scaling cliffs and highest towers,

“ “ To gain perchance a dingy plant,
 That I should call an ugly weed,—
 But which has value in *your* eyes,
 E’en to the slowly ripening seed.’

He answered her with pleading smile,—
 ‘ *I toil, my child, and spend my time
 In aid of science,—these are plants
 Rare in our northern English clime.*’

“ ‘ But they must die,’ said Apricot,—
 ‘ By thought we cannot keep alive;
 Life is hedged round by God’s decree
 However much we wish, or strive !’
 ‘ The sun, fair child, must pass away,
 And you and I must also die;
 Where then is the superior gain,
 Of your communion with the sky ? ’

“ The seraph grew a starry spray,—
 As one had touched a master-spring
 Of light, that lighted every point
 With sparklets from an Angel’s wing !
 Her golden hair all disentwined
 Was floating in the sunny breeze ;
 The spirit-life, so weirdly bright,
 Beaming with splendid memories.

“ She answer made, ‘ Our sun may pass,—
 The mountain flowers must fade and die :
 Not so, the Heaven where I live,
 It is a deathless land on high.’*
 ‘ You live on Earth, my Fairy Queen,’—
 He answered in the gravest tone ;
 For where we grasp the velvet gloss,
 The Butterfly’s fair plumes are gone.

“ A shadow veiled her countenance
 A transient moment, ere the sun,
 The spirit-life that burnt within,
 In all its pristine glory shone.

* Ephesians, ii. 6.

' Yon shining City is our *home*,
 Though here *at School* a little space ;
 But school-days end however long
 Before we see Our Father's face.'

" ' And do you call your mountain home
 A *School* ? my little girl,' he said ;
 ' Methinks you've strayed from Fairy-land,
 Where fairies are with gold-dust fed !
 For *here* we see not as *you* see,
 However stedfast be our gaze ;
 Albeit from my earliest youth
 I've sought to walk in Wisdom's ways.'

" Thus Apricot,—' Only last week
 A traveller came here to stay ;
 The great Niagara Falls he'd seen,
 And vividly described one day.
 But at the end, he truly said,
 ' Words leave its grandeur far behind !
 One glimpse is worth ten thousand books,
 To paint the scenery on the mind.'

" ' And I am at a loss to tell
 The glories pictured in the sky ;
 But, when you make your home above
 You will not ask the reason *why*.'
 ' My little girl,' the old man said,
 ' Teach me to look with your young eyes !
 And tell me of those hidden things
 Within your lovely Paradise ?'

" ' Sir,' said the fairy one, ' we fix
 Our thoughts on that we love the best ;
 And flowers and pets both die and fade
 In one long stream of dark unrest.

But the fair sun is ever new,
 More brightly golden every day ;
 It gazes on its Mighty King,
 And will not turn its face away.

“ ‘ In likeness to surrounding things,
 My Mother tells me we may grow ;
 She taught me that the Swedish hares,
 Are often found as white as snow.
 And when I gaze upon the sun,
 An ever-varying life is mine,—
 It is the mightiest type of God,
 An image of the life Divine.’

“ ‘ And what that life ? ’ the old man said—
 ‘ Tell me the loveliest thing in Heaven ?
 The Poets say it is the tear
 And penitence of the forgiven.’
 ‘ Nay ! ’ said the child, ‘ not the forgiven,
 But the FORGIVER of mankind !
 The sight that sees is God’s own gift,—
 And where He gives it not, we’re blind.’

“ Thus age and youth together learnt
 High on the Eagle’s wing to soar,—
 Old age loved not his flowers the less,
 For loving their Creator more.
 And when his stay at Sunnyside,
 On time’s fleet pinions drifted by,
 He bore away the rarest plants,
 And Apricot’s bright sapphire sky.

“ Well done, old man ! for evermore
 You’ll live to bless this sunny child,
 That led you upward on her ray,
 And by her loveliness beguiled !

Apricot, nourished as the plants,
 Imbibed pure heavenly light and dew ;
 She learnt from men, she learnt from books,
 And in all useful knowledge grew !

“ Her parents viewed her as a link
 Betwixt this earth and paradise ;
 Her heart a crystal border-land,
 Wherein they might survey the skies !
 On subtle wings her soul would soar,
 Above the clouds and mists of earth,
 And balance in that shadow-land
 The earthly and the heavenly worth.

“ Gliding from school days here below,
 To feast on sights that never tire ;
 The nipping frosts and chills of earth
 Need the rich glow of heavenly fire !
 Nor these alone, some mountain’s height
 With admiration fires our soul ;
 And as we gaze, the lofty peak
 Crumbles away and mars the whole.

“ She in her turn would gaze and love,
 To see her rosiest pleasures fade :
 But mists might rise and fall on earth,
 So that her Heaven was not in shade !
 Though if her home above appeared,
 Bedimmed by any cloudy veil,
 Apricot’s countenance would droop,
 As one who hears a mournful tale.

“ She fixed her choice at seventeen,—
 Wedding a man of noble aim ;
 One that like ‘ Enoch walked with God,’
 And sought a wife who did the same.

He was of distant kin, and rich,
The name of Golding also bore ;
And thus our Apricot retained
Her appellation as of yore.

“ And shortly after, Death, that comes
To all an uninvited guest,
Intruded his imposing state,
And bore that lady to her rest.
And she bequeathed her pretty house,
Wreathed in its flowery traceries,
To Apricot ;—hearts out of tune
Went there to catch her melodies.

“ Two silken cords to earth would bind
Her lovely spirit,—for her nest
Displayed a fairy boy and girl,
Too beautiful for earth's unrest !
In christening them, her fancy chose,
As by prophetic spell, to braid
Their names together—so that each,
As one fair life might bloom or fade.

“ The little Pearl was like herself,—
Replenished from some upper spring
With light, o'erflowing, bubbling up,
Reflecting it on everything.
You may not clasp the sunny rays,
They straight become strange phantasies ;
So none may grasp the children's joys,
Save as sweet echoing melodies.

“ The bright rose-coloured lily well
Imaged to me the joyous Pearl !
Her sprightly, merry dance would make
The loveliest pinks their hues unfurl ;

She flushed with genial sunny flame,
 That flashed and kindled in her eye !
 While Crystal watched with graver mien
 Her sparkling infant ecstasy.

“ Crystal possessed the deepest life,—
 He was the water lily white !
 Though none may delve in spirit-land
 With spade of clay, or earthly might.
 With colouring pale and very fair,—
 With mind serene as summer lake,
 No fitful gusts would cross *his* calm,
 No dreams perplex *him* when awake !

“ Two cherubs lent to earth awhile,
 They lived as though they saw the door
 Of the Jerusalem above,
 And longed to tread its golden floor.
 Crystal would gaze upon the sky,
 And talk to Pearl of far-off things !
 And Pearl would drink in all his thoughts,
 And soar on his aerial wings.

“ Were Crystal sad, the little Pearl
 Would soothe him in her fondest way ;
 And to be near him she would leave
 Her newest toys, her merriest play.
 She would not question him, or tease,
 She cared not to dissect his grief ;
 But her fair spirit fanned its wings,
 Lulled him, and made the suffering brief.

“ If a dark shadow passed o'er Pearl,
 Ruffling the beauty of her light,—
 Crystal would twine his arm around
 Her, whispering,—‘ Pearl, this is the night :

But a sun, unfading, shall arise,
 And clear, blue skies shall soon be seen ;
 Then you and I will sing our lays,
 Where blooms the land with living green ! '

" Methinks it was revealed to them
 That they should shortly see the King ;
 For day by day, their baby hearts
 Appeared a richer offering.
 One bright May morn these happy twins,
 Were playing on the sunny grass ;
 Unpacking, with the choicest care,
 Their birthday toys of coloured glass.

" When Crystal, with his far-off gaze,
 And spiritual melodious voice,
 Said, ' Might you choose a birthday gift,
 What my fair Pearl would be your choice ? '
 She seemed at once to catch his tone,
 And weirdly echoing the words,
 Replied, ' Oh ! Crystal, it would be
 To have the bright fleet wings of birds.'

" He asked, with calm responsive smile,—
 ' And what the bird *you'd* choose to be ? '
 ' Oh ! the bright skylark,' she rejoined,
 ' So musical its melody ! '
 ' *I'll* be the eagle,' Crystal said,
 ' It owns the strongest sight and wing ;
 Thus if you weary, lovely one,
 I'll bear you upward while you sing ! '

" That afternoon these children went,
 Out with their father in a boat ;
 It was a promised birthday treat,
 And Pearl attuned her skylark note.

The day was beautifully calm,
 The sun shone brightly on each sail,—
 When suddenly a squall arose,
 Which ended in the fiercest gale !

“ The lashing sea, the raging wind,
 Prepared them for a watery grave ;
 The shattered little vessel sank
 Engulphed beneath a giant wave !
 And thus these angel-children spent
 The happiest birthday they had known :
 Together, on their wished-for wings,
 They reached the glorious Emerald Throne.

“ Apricot learned the doleful tale,
 As one who'd not *too* much deplore,—
 Her precious treasures were not lost,—
 Only sent on to Heaven before !
 For long fair Apricot had drooped,
 The loveliest flower must fade away,—
 Petal by petal, leaf by leaf,
 She died to earth to bloom for aye.

“ The same celestial radiant joy,
 Followed her all the journey through ;
 And vivid grew the light divine,
 As glory dawned upon her view !
 She soared to Heaven in mid-day sun,
 Whither her couch had been conveyed ;
 Her last words said, ‘ As God's great type,
 Live in the sunshine, not the shade ! ’

“ All that remains in memory here,
 Is the plain epitaph, to say*—

* Psalm cvii. 1, 2. “ Oh give thanks unto the Lord, for He is good ; for His mercy endureth for ever. Let the redeemed of the Lord say so, whom He hath redeemed from the hand of the enemy.”

' That the redeemed *indeed* may thank,
 For all the mercies of the way :
 For all the tender love and care
 Which rescued in this hostile land,
 For all the Saviour's communings,
 And the outstretchings of His hand.'

" And round the grave, as monument
 To the united happy dead,
 The tube-rose and the heliotrope
 Their softest fragrance loved to shed ;
 And orange creepers hid the rail,
 And interlaced with jasmine bright,—
 For Pearl liked best the yellow flowers,
 And Crystal fancied most the white.

" Helen and Ronald lived for long,
 After their loved ones flew away ;
 As golden corn for harvest ripe,
 They met the signs of time's decay.
 Their tomb-stone said,* ' The hearing ear,
 Early the Saviour's glory knew ;
 But death threw back the gates of pearl,
 And JESUS STOOD HIMSELF in view !'

* Job xlvi. 5. "I have heard of Thee by the hearing of the ear : but now mine eye seeth Thee."



The Boy and the Butterfly.

A golden-haired Child in a garden strayed,
Where the south-west wind with the flowers played,
And it gathered these brilliant stars of earth,
And strewed them around it with childish mirth ;
Nor heeded the tears, which as dew-drops fell,
From beauties that loved their fair lives so well.
And the child grew faint in the summer sun,
Unmindful of victories lightly won ;
And laid itself down, with a wearied look,
'Neath a mountain ash in a grassy nook,—
While Jacob's angels glided to and fro,
Wafting sweet thoughts into this world of woe ;
And the nightingales tuned their minor strain,
To lull the fair boy till he woke again.
At length he oped his laughter-loving eyes,
And gazed anew upon the earth and skies,
When a gorgeous butterfly met his sight,
Arrayed and bejewelled in gala plight.
And flitting about from flower to flower,
Anon it lit on a jasmine bower ;
While the white little chubby dimpled hand,
Sought to grasp a prize no child could withstand.
“ Oh, lovely Butterfly ! Whither away,
With thy festive robe and thy plumage gay ?
If thou wilt come down to abide with me,
All my fairy haunts will I show to thee.
The mossy dingle where the fountains play,
With their feathery columns of diamond spray ;

Where the starry lily-buds, white and gold,
So softly expand in a bliss untold ;
And the frail forget-me-nots, pink and blue,
Have acquired a fame for their depth of hue :
While lemon flowers perfume the balmy air,
Those waxen flowers of tenderest fragrance there :
And summer birds, the nestlings of the spring,
In sweetest strains their softest carols sing.”
The Butterfly said,—“ Not so, for I’m free
To roam over earth or traverse the sea.
The jewelled spots upon my lustrous wings,
Were graven and polished by painful things :
They were stamped and colored within a cell,
Where I for a season was doomed to dwell.
’Twas there I learnt that every outer crust,
Which, grain by grain, is hourly turned to dust,
Must one day crumble as a mighty whole,
When the work-shop has modelled the living soul,—
When the furnace of clay at length has given,
The perfect hue for an all-perfect Heaven.
Oh ! I would not come down to play with thee,
For my new-born freedom is more to me ;
The golden spanglets on my plumage rare,
Were coined to sparkle in the upper air ;
Were fashioned to drink from the fountain head,
Whence the loveliest sunbeams are born and fed :
Oh, no ! my bright boy, I am framed by time,
For a far-off land and a sunnier clime.”
“ Oh, Butterfly ! Butterfly ! one short hour
I prithee to spend in my jasmine bower !
I long to behold thy jewels of fire,
Those quivering stars that never expire.
Those ruby circlets that kindle and shine,
With a play and a flicker all divine ;
And the brilliant sheen of thy amber light,
Befringed and bestudded with spots of night.”
The Butterfly rejoined,—“ Weep not, my Boy ;
I cannot now descend to be your toy.

My wings you covet in their early grace,
And would yourself outshine me in the race.
And so it *shall be*, if old Father Time,
Be-fit and fashion you for yonder clime ;
If while the peach-bloom rests in tender grace
Upon your cherub, dimpled, earnest face,
You're taught beneath Experience's rule,
The second master in Time's ancient school,
That all your disappointments here below,
Are bitter seeds from whence sweet flowers may grow,—
And learn in manhood's day that wishes crost,
Are never joys or happinesses lost,—
Only their counterfeit,—mocking the sight,
A trickery, a mirage of delight !
The fiery forge of life must ever show,
That fairest forms will need the sternest blow ;
That fairest colors struggle in the birth,—
While those of lower aim, and cheaper worth,
Need lesser pains,—imbibe a dye less pure,
That never can, and never shall endure.
The jewel is not polished in a day,
That aims to rival with the sunny ray.
All *lasting* beauty is the child of Pain,—
And that *she* fashions is not fraught in vain.
Her works are beautiful beyond compare,
Perfect her splendours, without flaunt or flare ;
Where she descends a messenger from *Heaven*,
The ripple of her lights are soft as Even.
Her gifted touch is masterly to trace
The Heavenly, where the Earthly once had place ;
She finds a heart with many cares besprent,
She broods thereon and leaves a deep content.
The change is costly,—for the gross must fade,
And much that once seemed bright be paled in shade,—
The man goes softly, smitten with an awe
Of things now seen as ne'er before he saw :
Glimpses of Paradise,—and sights sublime,
That strangely mock the coarser shades of time ;

Flinging, by contrast, leaden-colored hues,
O'er scenes that erst were draped in fairest blues.
But ere she quits that man, serene surprise
Begets a stately calm that maketh wise.
The fogs and mists that once obscured his sight
Are lifted,—and a soft, cool, stainless light,
Reveals things here not as in dreams of youth,
But as they're viewed by the great God of Truth.
Purged from the dross, but with the glory rife,
The Spirit quits this ante-natal life,—
The sheath has burst ! the chrysalis has riven !
Life but *begins* in yonder native Heaven.
So, lovely Cherub, when the hour draws nigh,
To spread your wings and soar above the sky,
We'll meet again,—then may your gems outshine
My mortal ones,—for *yours* shall be *Divine*!"



Reflections upon Life,

ON SEEING THE SIAMESE TWINS IN 1869.

"**W**HAT is our life?" the wise man asks,—
 "And *what?*" the child replies.
 But neither young nor old may grasp,
 Its subtle mysteries.
The brute creation live their lives
 As portions of our own;
But man's primeval font has heights,
 That theirs has never known.
Their passions and their instincts rise
 To those of human-kind,—
While sense and reason own their sway
 As attributes of mind.
But where man's higher life begins,
 Their lesser life must fail;
The link that binds him to his God,
 Extends beyond the veil.
The image of the Deity,
 Contains a spark Divine;
That spark expanding, by its flame
 All lower senses shine.
And as it grows, its budding light
 Breaks forth in starry sprays;
Stars that reflect the light of God,
 And teach His wondrous ways.
The ways by which He leads His own,
 With many tears and sighs,
Through earth and earth's devouring cares,
 To mansions in the skies.

And ever by these rays of light,
Links His beloved with Him ;
Revealing hidden splendours bright,
Where earthly glooms would dim.
These threads of light, as ladder stairs,
On shades of earth must lean ;
Though deepening glows on each ascent,
Show fewer clouds between.
And as each graduated height
Is reached with toilsome care,
We fondly hope the last of all
May land us safely there
Where, in the image of our God,
These tenements of clay
Are framed anew and beautified,
For His Eternal Day.
Where sin, and sin's companion, grief,
Can never touch again
Those spirits which the Saviour's hand
Has perfected through pain.
The higher spirits often lodge,
By God's supreme decree,
In tenements that lesser souls
Might sometimes scorn to see.
The tenement is broken down,
Deformed, decayed, defaced,—
But God's own sunbeams rest within,
And troublous shades are chased.
And in these huts they learn the lore
That fits them for a crown,—
Lighting up time with promises,
That God will not disown.
Of which, in deepening peaceful calm,
He gives the earnest here ;
While choicer jewels of His joy,
Are added year by year.
Are hewn from out the discipline
That fashions every thought

A gem of perfect workmanship,
A stone with beauty fraught.
Thus when their minds and wills have lost
Their own identity,—
And blend themselves in God for time,
And for Eternity :—
Then may they say, with Paul of old,
“ I am nor bond, nor free,—
The life I live, I live in God,
And God doth live in me ! ”

These thoughts were mine, as I beheld
Two forms which God had made,
Whose inner souls revealed the sun,
Their outer sheaths, the shade.
In both these men the house for time,
Was built with stones of grief ;
“ Twould have been well,” the many said,
“ Had life therein been brief.”
But as I viewed these forms with awe,
And solemn grateful praise,
It seemed such martial discipline
Could not be waste of days.
I watched the tutored self-command,
The fortitude of soul,
That made each spirit live for each
As for a perfect whole.
I watched the courteous grace of thought,
That flowed toward other men,—
The gentler instincts which arose,
From all their saddening ken.
A wearied look o'ershadowed them,
A melancholy gaze,—
That said, “ We're marked and singled out
By God's mysterious ways.”
But also said, “ It is His will !
And we would not repine ;

The hut is human, but the soul
That tenants it, *Divine.*"
Their gatherings, in crowded years,
Of very bitter life,
Seemed stored and treasured cunningly
As weapons for the strife.
Not for aggression, but defence,
Till Death should end the fray,
Which each and all must carry on
Throughout the live-long day.

But sad endurance gathers gleams
In sunshine as in shade ;
And here the softened mellowed lights,
With kindlier shadows played.
Casting around a joyless house,
Refinement's chastened air ;
The vesper lights of evening still,
So softly, sadly fair.
They never knew of infant joy,
Or childhood's flowery day ;
They could not join the little ones
In youthful games of play.
Early their stern instructor, Grief,
His martial aspect gave ;
While drilled and trained in Wisdom's ways,
Their souls grew strong and brave.
And as they rose to man's estate,
The shadow grew apace ;
No thought, no care, no energy,
Could ere that grief efface.
The spring and summer of their lives,
Knew not its wonted bloom :
And many emerald isles of life
Were veiled in dismal gloom.
E'en now, mid-autumn's golden glow
Cheers not the rugged way ;

Infirmity and Death are near,
To fill them with dismay.
Death is an awful thought to all,—
Though blessed must it be
To those who in the valley dark
The Saviour's Face will see !
Let us then hope that tenderly,
The angel Death may come,
To bear those fragile suffering forms
To an immortal home :—
A home where earth, and griefs of earth,
May never come to mind ;
But God-like souls, with God-like forms,
For ever be combined.



Lines

*Written New Year's Eve, 1867, on presenting to a friend a Paper
Knife, the base of which was inlaid with Forget-me-nots,
the apex with white Crocuses.*

“  FORGET-ME-NOT,” the old year saith,
“ For I shall yet remain,—
 You may not cancel aught of me,
My fruits of joy or pain.

I've been a worthy friend to you,
And now my *passive* life,
Will surely lend its colouring
To future active strife.

Together we have witnessed
Scenes of chameleon hue;
The dingiest gray, the darkest black,
The softest loveliest blue.

I've led you to the christening font,
Where mystic gifts are given,—
And tender buds of Paradise
Are registered for Heaven.

Elysian flowerets we have seen,
Bright with God's colouring,—
And sparkling with the early dew,
Of an immortal spring.

And such may never linger here,
Where dust and damp decay ;
The Saviour but o'ershadows them,
And then He calls away.

And I have led you where the bloom
Of life is at its height :
Where dancing days, and starry nights
Dazzle with silvery light.

Where youth doth plight her holy vows,
And pleasure seems to stand
Beside the bridegroom and the bride,
With cornucopian hand.

And I have shown you weary ones,
Of three-score years and ten,—
Chilled with the steep ascent of life,
And all its dreary ken.

We've visited the suffering sick,
Appalled with ghastly fear ;
Their earthly future paved with pain,
A dire distress anear !

We've stood beside the bed of death,
And heard the sons of earth,
Pronounce its costliest splendours,
Of less than little worth !

And to the church-yard we've repaired,
And heard the solemn word,
Resolving dust again to dust,
The spirit to the Lord.

And we have seen the tree of pain,
Bring forth a golden fruit ;
Beauties too dazzlingly fair,
To spring from such a root.

The prickly leaves have cast their thorns,
And waved their splendours high ;
While gazing on the Tree of Life,
In deathless majesty.

And we have heard the sons of God,
With solemn pathos say,—
“ Judge not our night, ye finite ones,
‘Till ye have known our day !

“ Our learning is too deep for you,
And far too multiplied ;
Grief is a blessing in disguise
That thus is glorified.”

And we have seen the tree of joy,
Bring forth the fruit of pain ;
The brilliant, the triumphant note,
End in the minor strain.

We've known the soft, the gentle word
Spring up all unawares,—
To yield a harvest full of light,
Crushing the weeds and tares.

We've watched the harsh unfeeling deed,
Assume a spectral form,—
Despoiling every halcyon day,
With deep unrest and storm.

And we have seen the direst loss
 Turn to the richest gain ;
While from the splendid gain we've viewed,
 The sad reverse of pain.

And now that my successor comes
 To lead you by the hand ;
Forget not me, forget not mine,
 While in this nether land.

I bless you, as a parting friend,
 With all my richest store ;
I bless your earthly lessons taught,
 I bless your Heavenly more.

I bless your home, where bright ones fair
 Cluster in Christmas cheer !
I bless your health, your happiness,
 For all the coming year !

And when the individual years
 Blend in identity,—
When all the varying hues of life
 Merge in eternity,—

Oh ! may they form a spotless white,
 Through God's beloved Son !
And for *His* sake, oh may we hear
 The joyous words, " Well done ! "



Lines on the Death of a friend,

February, 1867.

HAD a friend I fondly loved,
And hoped to meet again,
When winter's reign had passed us by,
With all his warrior train.

I knew his soldiers recklessly
Both young and old would slay ;
Knew that their missive weapons flew,
By night as well as day !

But I had fondly hoped *one* nook,
Might scare that band so fierce ;
Nor peeping chink, nor opening door,
Invite a shaft to pierce.

Laden with trophies and with spoils,
The foremost passed it by ;
And rank and file marched daily on,
Beneath a clearer sky.

At length the bands were filing off,
The hindmost were in sight,—
When, unawares, an archer's bow,
Was drawn with feeble might.

It scarcely seemed to rend the air,
But well it marked its prey ;
To those around, it brought stern night,
To her it touched, bright day !

The wound was fatal,—but life here
 Quivered a little space ;
 Quivered with joy *they* only know
 Who see “Our Father’s” face !

Who view all glory centering *there*,
 All beauty ebbing *here* ;
 And pine and press to spread their wings,
 And soar to yonder sphere !

Her mortal frame was very frail,
 Built for those summer skies,
 Where shapes of brightness float, and dream
 They are in Paradise !

She *needed* human thought and care,
 The choicest and the best ;
 To walk on softest eider-down,
 Within a rose-lined nest.

She *needed* a fond husband’s love
 To cheer and charm the way ;
 To lift the fogs and mists of earth,
 And shew a crystal day.

She *needed* some brave, joyous heart
 To raise the stones of life ;
 To pioneer the road, and build
 A causeway through the strife.

She *needed* all the youthful love
 That fondest children give ;
 And mid their primrose haunts, and vales,
 Anew her life to live.

She *needed* every line of life,
Woven in sunny rays ;
Prismatic colours that illumine
Earth's saddest, dreariest days.

She *found*, alas ! that things of earth,
Are cold, and fleet, and frail !
And longed to pierce our misty morn,
And soar beyond the veil.

A husband's love proved very strong,
But death out-measured strength ;
Then darkness seized her happy home,
In all its breadth and length.

"I shall rejoin him !" she would say,
"He may not come to me ;
He looks upon 'our Father's face,'
That face I long to see !

"And all is dark, and drear, and lone,
And nought can satiate here ;
But yonder world of loveliness,
Is near and very dear !"

Her children, in a common home,
Lived for themselves alone ;
Her joys, her wishes, or her griefs,
They never made their own.

Alone, amidst a cheery throng,
She wasted day by day ;
While few perceived or recognized
The lustre of decay.

For though dark shadows floated o'er
 The surface of her mind,
 She joined in social intercourse,
 And left the shades behind.

The over-arching cypress trees,
 Would weave their blackest shade ;
 But fair young thoughts kept peeping through
 The sombre dismal glade.

And liquid notes of tender joy,
 Spake of an eventide
 That fadeth not in solitude
 For God Himself is Guide.*

While things of Heaven, that *once* seemed dark,
 Were lit with brilliant light ;
 Earth and its stars had vanished all,
 Its moonshine, and its night.

Thus as she neared her happy home,
 Angelic forms sublime,
 Dissolved the veil, that falls betwixt
 Eternity and time.

And when the splendour grew too great,
 The loveliness too fair,
 The beauty far surpassing that
 Which mortal eye could bear !

The King of all this Glory sent
 His mandate from the skies,—
 “To-morrow shalt thou be with ME !
 With ME, in Paradise !”

* Isaiah xlivi. 5.—“For *I* am with thee.”

That Morrow morn the sun arose
Upon this hoary world,—
And weary men, in many lands,
Their working thoughts unfurled.

Her work was done! the voice of God
Had summoned her away;
And when HE calls, no child of His
Would ever care to stay.

And as she fled, we caught the words,
“For ever to abide,
With God! My God! my *First*,—my *Last*:
NOW am I SATISFIED!”



*L*ines,

ON BEING TOLD THAT WE *NEED* HUMAN
SYMPATHY.

*C*h Sympathy! thou gift of God,
Thou costly pearl of price!
Which none may buy or make his own,
By any quaint device.

We *all* begin by asking thee,
To be our constant guest,—
To bring thy train of courtly ones,
To quell our deep unrest.

And, may be, while the soft spring green
Puts forth its early shoot,
The genial sun of sympathy,
Will penetrate the root.

Causing the sap to swell, and sprout
In leaflets fair to see;
Tarrying, perchance, while lovely buds,
Unfold their fragrancy.

But failing soon in that soft touch,
That fitting sheathing air,
Which lily-bells, and tender flowers,
Ask of their Maker's care.

Alas ! *too soon* the ungentle rains,
 The scorching summer skies,
 Whisper these youthful lightsome lives,
 "Earth has no Paradise!"

Spring frosts *will* nip the bursting bloom,
 Spring rains *will* crush the flower ;
 While ruthless winds will make no truce,
 With children of an hour.

Creation is a wondrous type
 Of God's mysterious ways !
 It strengthens many human hearts,
 For windy, rainy days.

It teaches no fond mother's heart,
 In unison may beat ;
 No father by his manly power,
 Our circling foes defeat.

No friend, whose inmost heart is framed,
 Or fashioned as our own ;
 To whom, as to a second self,
 Each rising thought is known.

Our grief may be our neighbour's joy,
 His pain may be our jest ;
 The mechanism of a life,
 Is never manifest.

His ear is wrought for other tones,
 He sees not as we see ;
 The meters of the spirit-life,
 Are one long mystery.

And thus the lights and darks of earth
 Die in a wordless breast ;
 Or uttered, scoop a hollow cave
 Which hungry beasts infest.

But there is *One* whom no cross-lights
 Of earth, may lead astray !
 Who wearies not of tired ones,
 That droop upon the way.

And while HE lives, His mighty love
 Equals His boundless power ;
 He ever sends the fittest gift,
 In its most fitting hour !

Who that could own Golconda's mine,
 Would grope for grains of sand ?
 Who that could wear the regal crown,
 Would as the beggar stand ?

Who owns the friendship of his God,*
 No other friendship needs !
That gift of love, all other loves,
 Precedes, and supersedes.

Your earthly friend is but a man
 Who owns no surplus joy ;
 His rivulet of happiness
 Is blended with alloy.

It glides, perchance, with silver voice,
 O'er many polished stones ;
 But also winds through rugged paths,
 That call forth harrowing tones.

* Isaiah xli. 8.—“ Abraham My friend.”

You *need* a friend in life, to find
Far other thoughts engage ;
That day the current of his mind,
Will not your griefs assuage.

Haply the friend you need in death
Is many miles away ;
He'd gladly bid the last adieu,
Or ere you pass away,—

But some more pressing circumstance,
Disclaims the urgent need ;
Alas ! the secret chains of life
May truest love impede.

Then fill Life's cup with happiness !
Earth is a *barren* place ;
The happy pierce this straitened land,
And see their Father's face.

And fill Death's cup with readiness !
Full to the very brim
With the calm splendour of the peace
That maketh one with Him !

A friend *may* be a joyous gift ;
But wait till it is given :
And then accept it as a spark
From God's most gracious heaven.

Only a spark that may be quenched,
But helps to cheer the road,
Or ere the golden lights of God,
Are fully cast abroad.

(No shadows ever grasp *those* lights,
Or dim their mid-day hue;
They chase the shades, which vanish all,
To let the glory through.)

But lay no weight on fragile sparks,
Fair bubbles of the air !
Baal had mightier quests in view,
Nor heard his followers' prayer.

They cried aloud,—they smote themselves,
With lancet and with knife ;
Baal was journeying, or asleep,
Unmindful of the strife !

And Baal is a type of friends,
On whom we roughly lay,
A burden that the Lord can bear,—
But no frail god of clay.

Oh ! may *He* be our *All in All*,
Throughout life's stony road ;
Our *All* when sorrow spreads his pall,
And pauses with his load.

Our *All* when sorrow marches on,
And joy succeeds as guest,—
Lining our nest, where'er it be,
With light, and sunny rest.

Our *All* when comic, tragic scenes
Of earth are left behind ;
And visions of the stranger Death,
Are present to the mind.

Our *All* when Death himself appears,
His every foot-fall black,
Save the last step, the final touch,
That speeds our Heavenward track.

Our *All* throughout the Valley dark,
Where sun nor moon may shine,—
But Thou the Mighty First and Last,
The human Friend Divine.



The Angel of Prayer and Praise.

A DREAM.

 G was sauntering down a woodland vale, where glade
was lost in glade,
Now revelling in the sunshine bright, now in the
leafy shade.
The cowslips sweet, the soft pink may, the azure
hyacinths threw
An Eden beauty o'er old scenes that made them ever
new.

The Sun had sipped the morning dew, his majesty
made known ;
Creation, in responsive chaunt, swelled her grand
undertone ;
Glory and life he spread abroad, his own hosannas
singing,—
While soft vibrations of his praise in every heart were
trilling.

And as he climbed the mid-day sky, and gave his per-
fect splendour,
A fuller glory seemed to break, more infinite and
tender ;
And dazzled by his diamond spray, and sparkling lus-
trous light,
I sought an emerald velvet bank where fairies rest at
night.

I slept,—my canopy appeared the veil of Heaven's
King,
And flakes of crystal glory fell from every seraph wing;
Immortal rays of loveliest light, brilliantly crossed and
veined,
Arose from textures all divine, from colours self-sus-
tained.

And in mid-air two Cherubs met, poised on fair quiver-
ing wing ;
A laurelled wreath the Angel Praise, bore from the
Land of Spring.
“ All hail ! ” he said, “ We celebrate the golden power
of prayer !
Yours, the Elixir Vitæ, transmuting every care.

With reaching, fleet, supreme desire, that might not
tire or stay,
You supplicated for a life in God's appointed way ;
And at His throne by mystic power, your urgent hope
dilated,—
Hopes sunned in Heavenly altitudes are richly con-
summated !

'Twas in this far-off eagle-gaze, this winged ascent of
soul,
Where God, and God alone, became the vista's
mighty whole,—
The Great Inditer of your Prayer, enfranchised His
“ Amen,”
It flew to Earth exultingly, an unworn note of Eden.

And Heaven's King, named “ WONDERFUL,” forth
from His glory's glow,
A mandate issues, traced in light, such as the Seraphs
know ;

Paled by the finite where it falls, subdued and blanched
in ray,
But beaming with the deathless hue of everlasting day."

(For Cherubim, nor Seraphim, primæval light-fonts
see,—
Albeit angel elements glow with God-ecstacy.
While contemplative hours each day, dilate their brilliant souls ;
And deepening glories richly tinge celestial aureoles.

For who can gaze on Deity, nor feel the veil between,
Crossed by a woof of brilliancy, a golden glorious
sheen
That thins the warp,—till each in turn transmit colossal
lights,—
Ablaze with iris splendours, and fringed with mystic
whites ?)

The Angel Prayer this wondrous Scroll, read by its
argent light,—
A tender shining influent from the Great Infinite.
“ Thy Prayer in fleet ascension rose to seek My
Sovran Face,
And for the sake of Christ the Lord, obtained My
Regal grace.

“ But as the manna fell of old, the measure in its day,
Gathered by order, ere the sun had melted it away ;—
Nor to suffice in hoarded store to spare the morrow’s
toil,
Lest it should breed corruption’s worm, and suffer dire
despoil.

“ So *daily* plant your Eden hopes anear the Crystal River,
Where dew-drops, from the Tree of Life, distil on them for ever ;
Sustain their sheltered lives serene, 'neath the grand calms of Prayer,
Lest *one* cold cutting blast of earth, death to your seedlings bear.

“ Ay ! list ye,—when God's Israel fought with Amalek of old,
They marked not victory's progress by deeds of prowess told :
Moses, upon the hill, alone by mighty Prayer prevailed,
And Israel's glory brightly shone as hostile numbers failed.

“ But when the weary body flagged, and life-blood paled away,
Then did the germ of true success its latent force display,—
For as the hands of Moses fell, darkness and death were given ;
Upheld by Aaron and by Hur their victor shouts rent Heaven.”

The Cherub Prayer these evergreens bore from the hand of Praise,
O'erstrewn with glory sparklets from God's immediate gaze.
Cleaving the blue, their cadence fell in tones more rich, more full,—
They sang, “ When God the Giver is, His gifts are beautiful ! ”

I woke,—my oak of triumph seemed only the acorn's
green,—
Previsionizing regal shades, and trophies yet unseen.
But asking dainty cherishing, and hydromel in youth,
The balms of Araby to fan, aromas from the south.

And failing these,—cold withering death sucks out the
virile strength;
Decay appears not first to man, it is a work of length.
So, till our earthly journey end, for the same life I
pray,
Lest *one* omission generate wings to bear my toil away.



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